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State Department review completed

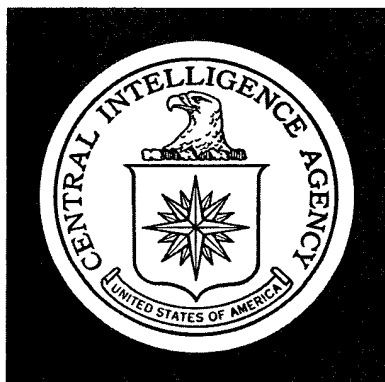
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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

State Department review
completed.

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Information as of 1600
14 July 1967

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HIGHLIGHTS

Allied forces on 14 July launched a sweep operation designed to clear Communist forces from allied positions near the DMZ.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
A new, joint US-ARVN sweep against the more than 10,000 Communist troops believed in the northeastern Quang Tri Province began on 14 July (Paras. 1-4). Communist forces attacked Da Nang Airfield and Hoi An, the capital of Quang Nam Province, with mortars and rockets early on 15 July (Paras. 5-7). Enemy casualties in the recent encounter in western Pleiku Province now total 156 (Paras. 8-9).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
The Central Election Council is expected to recommend to the Provisional National Assembly on 14 July that at least nine presidential slates be disqualified,

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The Vietnamese Confederation of Labor (CVT) has endorsed a senate slate made up of CVT members, but for the moment is withholding endorsement of a presidential slate (Para. 4).

III. North Vietnamese Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

IV. Other Communist Military Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.



I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. A massive three-day US - South Vietnamese sweep operation--codenamed HICKORY II--designed to clear Communist forces from the vicinity of allied positions near the DMZ in northeastern Quang Tri Province began early on 14 July.

2. The operation opened with the movement of a US Marine battalion southward from Con Thien toward previously established blocking positions near Cam Lo. Three battalions of the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) 1st Division almost simultaneously attacked to the north along Route 1 while another US Marine battalion employing amphibious vehicles moved along the coastal flatlands. Altogether, ten US Marine battalions and three ARVN battalions are committed to this short-term sweep in an effort to trap the more than 10,000 North Vietnamese soldiers believed to be in the immediate area.

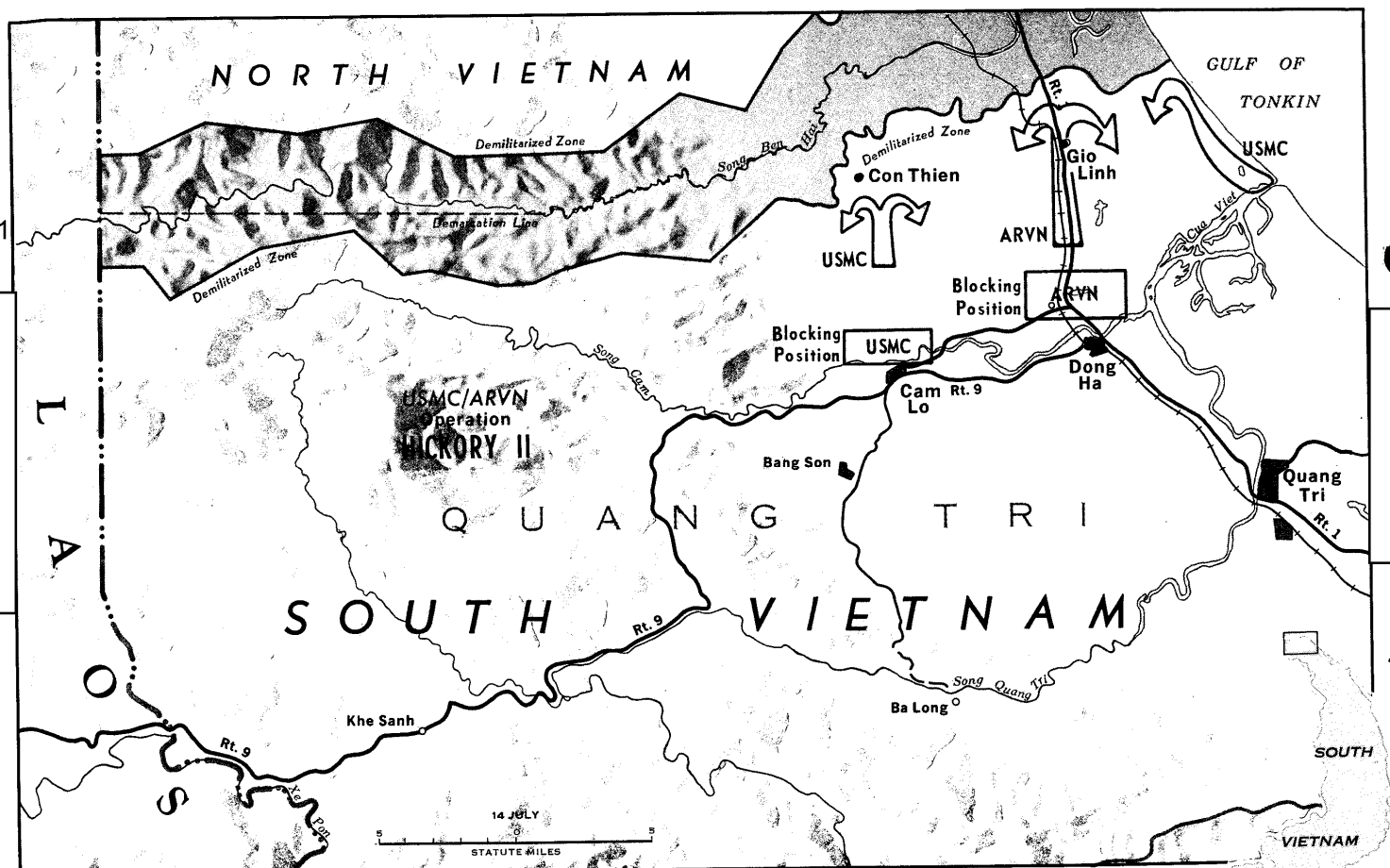
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4. This operation--together with Operation BUFFALO which ended on 14 July with 1,103 enemy soldiers reported killed--should disrupt enemy plans for intensified military activity in the eastern DMZ area.

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Communist Attacks in Quang Nam Province

5. Early on 15 July, the US air base at Da Nang and the Quang Nam provincial capital of Hoi An were struck by enemy mortar and rocket fire. Preliminary reports state that at least 50 Americans were wounded and three heavy cargo aircraft destroyed at Da Nang during the five-minute attack.

6. New enemy units have recently been noted infiltrating from Laos into Quang Nam Province. []

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[] a large number of enemy soldiers, possibly up to a division, have deployed into the mountains west of Da Nang. Aerial photography of late June disclosed many newly constructed bunkers and other enemy positions in eastern Quang Nam Province.

7. The enemy bombardment of these two important targets--Da Nang and Hoi An--suggests that the Communists may be ready to initiate an intensified campaign against vital allied supply lines and strategic positions in the coastal area of this province.

Operation FRANCIS MARION in Pleiku Province

8. Further US search of the battle area south of Duc Co in Pleiku Province, where heavy fighting took place on 11-12 July, has resulted in the location of 25 fresh graves containing 46 enemy dead. This brings the official count of enemy killed for the engagement to 156 compared with US losses of 32 killed, 27 wounded, and 12 missing.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. The Central Election Council expected to forward its recommendations for approval or disapproval of presidential slates to the Provisional National Assembly special committee on elections on 14 July, [REDACTED]

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2. The council's recommendations are not binding on the assembly and it is not known what influence they will have on the assembly's final decision. The assembly is to convene on 17 July to consider the recommendations; final posting of the approved slates is to be on 19 July.

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CVT to Support Senate Slate

4. During a meeting on 10 July, the National Council of the Vietnamese Confederation of Labor (CVT) endorsed the Senate slate made up of ten CVT members and headed by CVT secretary general Tran Huu Quyen. This endorsement means, according to CVT president Tran Quoc Buu, that the labor organization will use all its resources throughout the country to work for the election of the slate. The national council withheld any endorsement of a presidential slate, leaving this for later consideration by the smaller executive committee because, according to Buu, it is too early to make a choice, especially after the last-minute formation of the Thieu-Ky ticket. There has been prior evidence that Buu himself favored Ky's candidacy, whereas some other top CVT officials leaned toward civilian candidates. The US Embassy believes that CVT leaders are still undecided about the presidential race and that many are opposed to the purely military character of the Thieu-Ky ticket. There is also some CVT sympathy for General Minh. Buu believes that keeping Minh out would be a serious political error which would make a martyr of a candidate who would probably not win anyway.

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